

GIORGIO ARMANI

GIORGIO ARMANI OPENS ARMANI/5th AVENUE IN NEW YORK

On February 18, 2009 Giorgio Armani comes to the most celebrated street in New York. Fifth Avenue has been the focal point of many contemporary and historical events, and has featured in novels such as Edith Wharton's *The Age of Innocence*, and countless films in which its most famous buildings such as the Empire State Building or the New York Public Library have played a major part. As for the museums, there are so many that the section that fronts Central Park is known as Museum Mile.

"A really exciting challenge – that is how I would describe our new concept store, Armani/5th Avenue in New York. It is a special project requiring a degree of courage, as it brings together in one space different elements such as Armani Jeans and Emporio Armani side by side with Giorgio Armani. I was determined to send out a clear message of change, interpreting the current trend for mixing genres, juxtaposing items in different price brackets. You could say that this is a provocative move – uniting in the same place and with the same furnishings, without visible boundaries, the various collections that combine to form the entire Armani universe.

This freedom of expression defines for me the spirit of Fifth Avenue: a prestigious shopping destination, of course, but one that is less exclusive in character than comparable addresses, with a democratic mood which I am certain represents the future. I worked on the creation of this store with Doriana and Massimiliano Fuksas, whose hugely respected architectural practice is known for bringing a precisely judged sense of glamour to clothing stores. This is the third project we have jointly accomplished, following on from Armani/Chater House in Hong Kong and Armani/Ginza Tower in Tokyo, and significantly all three offer totally distinctive environments, each different from the other, because I contend that identical retail spaces, monolithic and repetitive, belong in the past and cannot match the experience offered by a totally original store which introduces the public to the aesthetic excitement of fine contemporary architecture."

Giorgio Armani

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ARMANI/5th AVENUE

On this avenue, that combines historical significance with an ultra modern, vibrant and pulsating buzz, at the intersection with 56th Street, Armani/5th Avenue is revealed as a neatly defined and light building completely clad in glass - 164 feet long and 45 feet high (50 meters long and 14 meters high). Spread over 4 floors, one of which is the basement, the store covers a total area of 43,000 square feet (4,000 square meters); the retail area covers approximately 30,000 square feet (2800 square meters) of which 5200 (480 square meters) is occupied by the Bar and Restaurant.

Form and structure

Giorgio Armani has selected the architects Doriana and Massimiliano Fuksas and has actively collaborated with them throughout this building, conceived as a single, fluid space providing uninterrupted intercommunication, brought together by the impact of the vortex of the staircase. The heart of the building is, in fact, epitomized by the staircase, a structure in rolled calender steel, made in Italy, and clad in plastic material that highlights its exceptional sculptural presence, an entity that is almost impossible to convey in terms of any normal geometric shape.

The sense of movement

An interplay of slightly overlapping bands distinguishes the structure of the building and leads to the upper floors, gliding over the vertical surface of the interior.

Each floor opens out into an ever-changing pattern of curved surfaces that add visual interest to the light putty-colored walls. Whereas the colors are pure and constant – beige for the walls, black for the floors and ceilings, and metal – the shine, the glossy look, the use of different materials, the reflections from the lighting - all suggest movement, subdued atmosphere and color. Special attention has been paid to the lighting, which defines and emphasizes the curvature of the walls and spaces. The use of curves is a constant feature throughout the interior design, and is evident in every aspect of the store, from the display units to the hanging units, from desks to armchairs.

The internal layout

This fabulous concept store brings together the world of Armani throughout. For signature shopping, there is no better place to start than on the ground floor for Emporio Armani and Giorgio Armani accessories as well as the Emporio Armani collection for women. Down in the basement is the realm of those who favor a casual style of dress: Armani Jeans, EA7 – the sports line that includes specialized clothing and equipment, Emporio Armani Underwear and the Swimwear range.

The further up the building, the more selective and refined the choice of products become. On the first floor, the Cosmetic area beckons, with its ultra sophisticated range of products with Crema Nera and the more sophisticated perfumes, followed by the area dedicated to Giorgio Armani and Emporio Armani shoes. From here it is a short hop to Giorgio Armani, Fashion, Classics and Eveningwear, all for women. Following the pathway of the staircase and descending a few steps, the space is dedicated exclusively to the fashion section of the Emporio Armani line for men.

On the second floor, Emporio Armani, Giorgio Armani for men and Emporio Armani and Giorgio Armani shoes for men are displayed. This floor also houses Armani/Casa, offering a choice of *objets*; the space successfully evokes the huge Armani/Casa store in Soho. Nearby there is a small area dedicated to the delights of Armani/Dolci, the first retail area for this collection of delicacies to open in the USA.

On both the first and second level, two specific spaces have been conceived and reserved for a private VIP fitting room.

From the Armani/Restaurant on the top floor, a fabulous view can be enjoyed – through an amber-colored filter – down Fifth Avenue, with Central Park in the background. A line of lighting on the ground leads to the entrance to the restaurant, emphasizing the sensuous curve of the wall. A virtual curtain is raised as you pass through it... the show begins, making the customer the star.

Doriana and Massimiliano Fuksas said: “The building that incorporates Armani/5th Avenue holds a very important place in the history of architecture because its façade is one of the first examples of the “International Style”. When one is dealing with such a cultural milestone, one must always bear in mind that the exterior is totally New York, while the interior should have its own identity. A reflection of the flair and aesthetic values that define the Giorgio Armani style. The grand staircase is the focal point, an exciting sculptural feature which connects all the different levels that accommodate the Armani universe range by range. Innovative in both layout and content, Armani/5th Avenue is the first concept store in which all the Armani products are presented in a single space, where the same design has been adopted throughout: the subtle colours and restrained shapes emphasise the value of the product.”

The Armani/5th Avenue Special Collections

To celebrate the opening of this new concept store, Giorgio Armani has created a range of special accessories – a capsule collection that includes pieces from both Giorgio Armani and Emporio Armani, only available for sale in the 5th Avenue store. Notice the logo – all the Giorgio Armani items feature a black label inscribed “Armani/5th Avenue - Limited Edition.” Meanwhile the Emporio Armani items have the following inscription: “Armani/5th Avenue - Exclusive Edition.”

The Giorgio Armani collections will include a jacket in blue python skin, a crew neck cashmere pullover, jeans, eyewear with a metal tag, accessories in crocodile nappa, and watches. The Emporio Armani collections present an ultra urban and international look that reflects the vibrant energy so typical of Manhattan.